em **timor-leste**

a paz é possível

TL 2265

Dear friends,

our silence over the past few months does not mean that we were less active. On the contrary, our activities did not leave us much time to write our friends.

Summary of our recent activities:

I. Information

Portugal

- Press communiqué before the General Assembly of the U.N. took place
- Two opinion articles in the 'Diário de Notícias'
- Articles in church papers: Comunio, Ventos-Novos, S.A.I., Libertar
- Information given to the TV-networks and radio stations as well as participation in several programs
- The TV-news of the 7th of December 1984 made use of photographs and a text supplied by us
- News-letters Nº 7 and Nº 8. Publishing some important documents (letter of Mgr. Belo, Timorese priests and Mgr. Costa Lopes), which had been sent beforehand to solidarity groups and the press
- Booklet "Timor-Leste 1974-1984". This booklet (80 pages) is a summary of East Timor's history over the last 10 years; the position of the Church in East Timor and abroad on this genocide; the development of the issue on the international level, etc.. The work on this booklet has led to a delay in the publishing of our regular news-letter.

Other countries

- Article in Il Regno (Italy)
- colaboration in various publications:

Rua de Campolide, 215, 4.º Dto. 1000 Lisboa Portugal

Actualité Réligieuse dans le Monde (France)
Christian Solidarity International (Switzerland)
Justice and Peace Commission (France)

- News-letters Nº 7 and Nº 8 in French
- News-letter Nº 7 in English

(Francis McDonagh [CIIR] made the proposal to have the information in English translated and published in London, which we have gladly accepted. This will allow a better selection of the information for the English-speaking public and will avoid errors in the language of Shakespeare.

II Refugees

The contacts of some members of our group with the Timorese refugees in the "Jamor Valley" have increased. Our group started several initiatives which were supported by the refugees:

- Two weeks of organized activities with one hundred refugee children (beach, sports, handicrafts, etc.) during the holiday season
- Cleaning campaign of the refugee camp and its surroundings, supported by public services
- Preparation of a Christmas feast for the children of the camp (Timorese, Cape Verdians, Mozambicans)
- Organization of a Timorese cultural feast to commemorate the anniversary of the the Indonesian invasion (7th of December 1975) in cooperation with C.D.P.M.

  This cultural event was carried out by the Timorese refugees themselves and had two main objectives:
  - reunite the refugees of different political opinions around the values they have in common
  - make the Portuguese audience feel the force and richness of this culture, which is the expression of the national identity of East Timor.

The main idea of all activities carried out concerning the refugees is to reunite them around events which value more what they have in common than what creates divisions among them and to help them solve their problems.

III. Churches

We multiplied our contacts with personalities and religious groups:

- Letters were sent to the Portuguese and Indonesian bishops
- Letters were sent to religious leaders
- Meetings were held with Dom Serafim, auxiliary bishop of Lisbon and at the present moment ~~president~~ secretary of the Portuguese Bishops' Conference and with the presidents of the Protestant and Evangelic Church organizations
- Another meeting was held with the president of the Portuguese YMCA and several articles were written to be published by the periodicals of the organization on the national as well as the international level. We were told that the national YMCAs of other countries would be contacted in order to start a sensibilization campaign.
- The Presbyterian Church (a priest of this Church is member of our group) has proceeded to collect signatures in support of East Timor
- On the 1st of December a 'day of reflection on East Timor' was held in Oporto, which was organized in cooperation with C.D.P.M., but which was mainly directed towards Christian circles. With a participation of 80 people (clergy and laymen) this meeting received a lot of attention in the regional press, specially in the newspaper of the diocesis (Voz Portucalense).
  It was decided to form a solidarity group of Christians in the north of Portugal.
- On the 7th of December a vigil of reflection and oration was held at the Rato Chapel in Lisbon together with the Movement of Catholic Students
- Suggestion and support for Mgr. da Costa Lopesin writing a letter to the French bishops.

IV Human Rights and Political Aspects

- Responding to an invitation made by Pax Romana we sent Luísa Teotónio Pereira, a member of C.D.P.M., to Geneva. This kind of activity at the U.N. Subcommission for Minorities was new to her and to our group, but we think that this experience was positive in all aspects.
  Luisa spoke on behalf of Pax Romana.

The resolution of which almost everybody had thought that it would not even be circulated was passed with 10 votes against one single vote. This indicates a clear recuperation of the specialists who are members of this Commission.
The experience, the new contacts and the fact that a representative of a Portuguese organization participated in this session created a lot of interest in Portugal and was altogether positive.
We hope to participate in the meeting of the Human Rights Commission in February 1985.

- We were asked to help work out a document for para-diplomatic channels
- We were received by Maria de Lurdes Pintasilgo, adviser on the Timor question of the President of the Republic

Our Group, new projects

Financial support that we have received from "Brot fUr die Welt" will allow us to carry out future actions which have not been possible so far. We made use of a text on Timor issued by the Permanent Council of the Portuguese Bishops Conference, which had not been circulating in the parishes and decided to make a poster with it which will be sent to all parishes so that it can be used on the 1st of January, the day the Catholic Church dedicates to peace. Some bishops have already agreed to help with the distribution of the posters in their dioceses and we hope that even more bishops will join this effort.

The same financial support allowed us to hire ANA NUNES to assist our work.

We are thinking of organizing an exposition and a slide-show, which will be used during public sessions on East Timor.

We shall try to keep you better informed on our activities to allow you to follow our work.
We wish to thank you for all your help without which our work would not have been possible and we will be glad to receive any comments or suggestions you would like to make.

A happy and healthy New Year,